**The Shurangama Sutra**

**VOLUME 3**

**CHAPTER 3**

**The Six Entrances**

N2 The six entrances are the treasury of the Thus Come One.
O1 General statement.

**Sutra:“Moreover, Ananda, why do I say that the six entrances have their origin in the wonderful nature of true suchness, the treasury of the Thus Come One?

Commentary:**The five skandhas of form, feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness have now been explained. All five are a manifestation of the wonderful nature of true suchness of the Thus Come One’s treasury. Now the Buddha again calls out: **Moreover, Ananda, why do I say that the six entrances have their origin in the wonderful nature of true suchness, the treasury of the Thus Come One?** Why is it said that the six entrances - the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind - are all the nature of the Thus Come One’s treasury? The six entrances will be distinguished below, and it will be explained.

O2 Specific explanation.
P1 The eye entrance.
Q1 Brings up example to reveal the false.

**Sutra:“Ananda, although the eye’s staring causes fatigue, the eye and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Staring gives rise to the characteristic of fatigue.

Commentary:**The Buddha called out: **Ananda, although the eye’s staring causes fatigue** - this refers to the earlier discussion of the eye that looks into emptiness until its staring gives rise to the characteristic of fatigue. The eye stares and eventually becomes tired. **The eye and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Staring gives rise to the characteristic of fatigue.** These two kinds of manifestations are not apart from Bodhi. In the true nature of Bodhi, the characteristic of fatigue is produced.

Q2 Explains that the false has no substance.

**Sutra:“Because a sense of seeing is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of light and dark, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of seeing. Apart from the two defiling objects of light and dark, this seeing is ultimately without substance.

Commentary:** Why do I say that within the true nature of Bodhi the staring gives rise to the characteristic of fatigue? Ananda, you should know that **because a sense of seeing is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of light and dark** - it becomes involved with the two characteristics of form, light and dark, two false, defiling objects. Light and dark are part of the empty and false environment which lies before you. With the existence of this empty, false environment, there arises the nature of seeing. **Defiling aspects are taken in -** the seeing takes in the forms and appearances of the defiling environment which lies before it. **This is called the nature of seeing.** It is the nature of the substance of seeing. This “nature of seeing” does not refer to the “understanding the mind and seeing the nature” which is discussed in the Chan school. Here, the “nature of seeing” refers to the substance and nature of one’s ordinary seeing. “Understanding the mind and seeing the nature” means one understands one’s own mind and sees one’s own nature. “Seeing the nature” refers in that case to seeing one’s own inherent Buddha nature. But the “seeing-nature” referred to here is just the nature of ordinary seeing. **Apart from the two defiling objects of light and dark, this seeing -** when this nature of seeing becomes separate from the two defiling objects of light and dark - **is ultimately without substance.** It hasn’t any actual substance. There is nothing which actually exists.

Q3 It has no source.

**Sutra:“Thus, Ananda, you should know that seeing does not come from light or dark, nor does it come forth from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness.

Commentary:Thus, Ananda, you should know that seeing does not come from light or dark.** The nature of seeing does not come from light, nor is it produced from within darkness. **Nor does it come forth from the sense organ -** nor is it produced from the eye, **nor is it produced from emptiness.** Nor is it produced from within emptiness.

**Sutra:“Why? If it came from light, then it would be extinguished when it is dark, and you would not see darkness. If it came from darkness, then it would be extinguished when it is light, and you would not see light.**

**Commentary:Why? If it came from light -** if the nature of seeing came from the defiling object of light - **then it would be extinguished when it is dark.** The two defiling objects of light and dark cannot exist simultaneously. When one comes, the other goes. They cannot stand together. If you want to say that the seeing comes from light, then there could not be any darkness. **And you would not see darkness.** And so the nature of seeing would not see dark things. But when the light goes, the seeing can see the darkness. So the seeing does not come from light, nor does it come from darkness. **If it came from darkness, then it would be extinguished when it is light.** If the nature of seeing arose from the defiling object of darkness, there would not be any light. We would not be able to see the characteristic of light.

**Sutra:“Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of light and dark: a nature of seeing such as this would have no self-nature.

Commentary:** If you say the seeing is produced from the eye, **suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of light and dark.** If it came from the eye, it would not be composed of the two kinds of defiling appearances of light and dark. According to that explanation, **a nature of seeing such as this** - the seeing essence - **would have no self-nature.** If it came from the eye, it would not have its own substantial nature. So it is not brought about from the sense organ.

**Sutra:“Suppose it came forth from emptiness. When it looks in front of you, it sees the shapes of the defiling dust; turning around, it would see your sense organ. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which sees, what connection would that have with your entrance?

Commentary:Suppose it came forth from emptiness.** Suppose you say the essence of seeing is produced from within emptiness. **When it looks in front of you, it sees the shapes of the defiling dust.** Looking in front, it can see the defiling dust. **Turning around, it would see your sense organ.** When the seeing turned back, it would see your eye. It sees in front; why can’t it see when it turns around? Nothing is obstructing it. Why can’t you see your own eyes? **Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which sees -** moreover, if you say it is produced from emptiness, if emptiness itself sees emptiness, **what connection would that have with your entrance?** Would it have any connection with your own basic nature? Do you have anything to do with what goes on with emptiness? So it is not produced from emptiness.

Q4 Concludes by returning the false to the true.

**Sutra: “Therefore, you should know that the eye entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature.

Commentary:Therefore,** because of this, Ananda, **you should know that the eye entrance,** the first of the six entrances, the eye organ, **is empty and false.** Its arisal is empty and false, and its extinction is empty and false, **since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence -** it is not produced from causes and conditions, and its extinction is not based on causes and conditions - **nor is spontaneous in nature.** Nor does it come about spontaneously. Its place of origin is within the treasury of the Thus Come One.

P2 The ear entrance.
Q1 Brings up an example to reveal the false.

**Sutra: “Ananda, consider, for example, a person who suddenly stops up his ears with two fingers. Because the sense organ of hearing has become fatigued, a sound is heard in his head. However, both the ears and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Monotony will produce the characteristic of fatigue.

Commentary:** Now the ear entrance will be discussed. **Ananda, consider, for example, a person** - basically there is no such person who plays around like this. The Buddha just supposes there might be such a person - **who suddenly stops up his ears with two fingers.** He plugs up his ears. **Because the sense organ of hearing has become fatigued, a sound is heard in his head.** After you have plugged up your ears for a long time, they don’t hear the sounds outside, but inside something goes haywire. A sound comes forth inside. The sounds we hear are sounds outside, but now he stops up his ears so he can’t hear outside, and he hears a sound inside. To plug up your ears for that long would be like staying in your room for a long time and not going outside to look at things. After a long while you will feel very depressed, and you’ll want to go out for a walk and run around. In the same way the ear usually listens to things going on outside. If you do not permit it to listen, but instead stop it up so it cannot hear, it will listen inside. What kind of sound occurs inside the head? Try it out. Stop up your ears for a couple of days and see what sound you hear. Then you will know. So I won’t discuss now what kind of sound the person in the example heard.

**However, both the ears and the fatigue originate in Bodhi.** The characteristic of fatigue and the ear are both the true nature of Bodhi within the treasury of the Thus Come One. **Monotony will produce the characteristic of fatigue.** One ignorant thought produces falseness, and then it turns into the functioning of the ear organ.

Q2 Explains that the false has no substance.

**Sutra:“Because a sense of hearing is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of movement and stillness, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of hearing. Apart from the two defiling objects of movement and stillness, this hearing is ultimately without substance.

Commentary:Because** it relies on **the two false, defiling objects of movement and stillness** - hearing dwells in the midst of them. In the midst of them arises a hearing nature - **defiling appearances are taken in.** The two defiling objects of movement and stillness cause the nature of hearing to arise in the ear. The hearing nature is like a magnet which attracts pieces of metal. These defiling appearances are not pure and clean. They are called “dust” in Chinese. Why is there defilement in people’s self natures? I’ll tell you why. It is because the eyes look at things and attract defiling appearances, which makes them unclean. The ears hear sounds and attract the defiling appearances. They attract unclean things. Basically the self nature is clear and pure. It has no defilement. But because the eye and ear attract unclean external things, the self nature within becomes defiled also.

The word “attract” (*xi* ) can also mean to “inhale,” as in inhaling cigarette smoke. When one inhales cigarette smoke, it passes into the lungs, and although ordinary people cannot see into their own insides, the fact remains that one’s throat, windpipe, and lungs become coated with tar. Haven’t you seen the black tar collected in a chimney? People who smoke have the same kind of deposits of tar in their lungs. But since you haven’t had an operation to disclose this, your intestines, throat, and internal organs can be coated with tar and you still are unaware of it. “Defiling aspects are taken in” is the same kind of principle. Because you take in external defiling appearances, your self nature is coated with a kind of tar, although you cannot see it. It is defiled by these things, and because it is covered over, it lacks light. Shen Xiu said,

The body is a Bodhi tree,
The mind a bright mirror stand.
Time and again brush it clean,
And let no dust alight.

Basically this verse is a fine expression of principle, but these are not the words of one who has seen his nature. It talks about cultivation, a level prior to seeing the nature. It likens cultivation of the Way to dusting a mirror, over and over again to keep it bright. One who cultivates the Way is like one who wipes the dust off the mirror. After Great Master Shen Xiu spoke this verse, the Sixth Patriarch, the Great Master Hui Neng, replied with the following verse:

Originally Bodhi has no tree,
Nor any bright mirror stand.
Originally there is not one thing.
Where can the dust alight?

That is to say, everything is taken care of. In cultivating the Way he has already been certified as having obtained the fruition. After one has been certified as having attained the fruition, it is not necessary to do the kind of work the Great Master Shen Xiu’s verse speaks of. Most people say that Great Master Hui Neng’s verse is well said, but that the Great Master Shen Xiu’s is poorly stated. Actually, both verses are good. For those who understand the Buddhadharma, every dharma is Buddhadharma. When you speak Buddhadharma to those who do not understand, they do not realize it is Buddhadharma. So you should conscientiously investigate this doctrine. If you understand it, you can understand all doctrines.

**This is called the nature of hearing -** when the organ of the ear takes in the defiling objective realm. **Apart from the two defiling objects of movement and stillness -** if the hearing nature is separated from the two defiling objects of movement and stillness - **this hearing is ultimately without substance.** It hasn’t any nature of its own.

Q3 It has no source.

**Sutra:“Thus, Ananda, you should know that hearing does not come from movement and stillness; nor does it come from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness.

Commentary:Thus** refers to the circumstance spoken of above, in which “the ear and the fatigue are both Bodhi. Monotony gives rise to the characteristic of fatigue.” **Ananda, you should know that hearing does not come from movement and stillness.** It is not from movement and stillness that the hearing nature comes. **Nor does it come from the sense organ.** Nor does the hearing nature come from the ear. **Nor is it produced from emptiness.** Nor is the nature of hearing produced from within emptiness.

**Sutra: “Why? If it came from stillness, it would be extinguished when there is movement, and you would not hear movement. If it came from movement, then it would be extinguished when there is stillness, and you would not be aware of the stillness.

Commentary:Why? If it came from stillness -** this is more or less like the meaning presented above, but you should not be annoyed. The doctrine must be explained in minute detail. The Buddha explained the realm of the six organs in great detail.

**It would be extinguished when there is movement, and you would not hear movement.** If the nature of hearing came from stillness, then when there is movement it would be destroyed. There would not be any hearing nature. But there is a hearing nature when there is stillness, and there is a hearing nature when there is movement.

**If it came from movement, then it would be extinguished when there is stillness, and you would not be aware of the stillness.** If the hearing nature came from within movement, there wouldn’t be any stillness. You wouldn’t know about the characteristic of stillness. If it came from within stillness, then you wouldn’t know there is a characteristic of movement. Therefore, the hearing nature is not produced from the two defiling objective appearances of movement and stillness.

**Sutra:“Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of movement and stillness: a nature of hearing such as this would have no self nature.

Commentary:Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of movement and stillness.** The two defiling objects of movement and stillness would be absent. **A nature of hearing such as this** spoken of above, **would have no self nature.** Why? If it had a substance, it would have a substantial nature, but you cannot find the substantial nature of the hearing nature.

**Sutra: “Suppose it came from emptiness: emptiness would then become hearing and would no longer be emptiness. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which hears, what connection would it have with your entrance?

Commentary: Suppose it came from emptiness -** if it is produced from within emptiness - **emptiness would then become hearing and would no longer be emptiness.** Suppose the hearing nature arose from within emptiness. Emptiness is devoid of knowing and awareness; it is senseless, and so if emptiness were to have a nature of hearing, it could no longer be called emptiness. Therefore, hearing does not come from emptiness. **Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which hears** - suppose we say that the hearing nature is produced from emptiness, then **what connection would it have with your entrance?** What would it have to do with you? It wouldn’t have any connection with anyone.

Q4 Concludes by returning the false to the true.

**Sutra: “Therefore, you should know that the ear entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature.

Commentary:Therefore, you should know that the ear entrance is empty and false.** Because of this, you ought to know that the ear entrance - that kind of hearing nature - is an empty falseness, **since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature.** It does not originate by being produced either from causes and conditions or by spontaneity.

P3 The nose entrance.
Q1 Brings up an example to reveal the false.

**Sutra:“Ananda, consider, for example, a person who inhales deeply through his nose. After he has inhaled for a long time it becomes fatigued, and then there is a sensation of cold in the nose. Because of that sensation, there are the distinctions of penetration and obstruction, of emptiness and actuality, and so forth, including all fragrant and stinking vapors. However, both the nose and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Overexertion will produce the characteristic of fatigue.

Commentary:**The eyes and ears have already been explained above. Now it is the nose entrance which will be discussed. “**Ananda,”** Shakyamuni Buddha calls Ananda’s name in order to cause him to be particularly attentive. “You should listen well to the doctrines I explain for you. **Consider, for example, a person” -** suppose there were such a one. What does this person do? He hasn’t anything to do, so he plays a joke on him self. How? He **inhales deeply through his nose.** He keeps sniffing in. He inhales sharply. Now, usually we make use of our sense of smell when there is something to smell, but this person inhales deeply through his nose, and not only does he do it deeply, he does it for a long time. **After he has inhaled for a long time it becomes fatigued.** If you breathe in for a long time, you will feel tired. The nose will get tired. And when it gets tired false thinking arises. The nose gives rise to false thinking. What kind of false thinking? Probably it thinks, “Rest. Rest.” But the person does not let it rest. And so then it has a sensation. What sensation? **Then there is a sensation of cold in the nose.** The breath it takes in feels cold. Extremely icy. **Because of that sensation, there are the distinctions** made. In the midst of that icy breath, it gives rise to discriminations concerning the sensation of the breath entering the nostrils. What distinctions does it make? **Penetration and obstruction.** “Ah, my nostrils are stopped up.” Or, “I can breathe through my right nostril but not through my left one.” He starts making distinctions. Not having anything to do, he finds something to do, producing all those discriminations. **Emptiness and actuality.** “Emptiness” refers to penetration, and “actuality” refers to obstruction. He thinks, “Ah, do I have a cold now, since I can’t breathe through my nose?” He makes these kinds of distinctions.

**And so forth, including all fragrant and stinking vapors.** What is meant by “stinking?” The Chinese character (xiu, to stink) is a combination of the character (zi, self) and the character (da, great); so “stinking” is explained as “a great self.” To look upon oneself as very great is what is meant by “stinking.” So it is said, “a great self stinks.” Some people don’t know what “fragrant and stinking vapors” refers to. I’ll tell you. Take a fish, set it down somewhere, and pay no further attention to it. After a while it will stink. And when it begins to stink, it will produce worms. Basically fish are edible, but once there are worms in them, you don’t want to eat them. Not to speak of eating them, all you have to do is think about what they would smell like, and that is enough to make you want to vomit. Just as when someone speaks of sour plums your mouth waters, or when you think about standing on the rim of a ten thousand foot precipice, your legs grow weak, and the soles of your feet begin to ache: it’s the same principle. If you think about stinking things, you want to vomit.

It’s very strange: people from Shanghai only like to eat things that stink. They like to eat bean curd that smells like excrement from a toilet. Wouldn’t you say that is strange? I’m not slandering people from Shanghai: that’s really the way they are. Then again, when I went to Pu Tou mountain, to Fa You monastery and Pu Ti monastery, the people native to these areas ate nothing but stinking sugar cane. Basically sugar cane is for making sugar, and I don’t know what they did to it, but it stank to high heaven. Basically I am not choosy about what I eat. I eat the good and bad alike. When it comes to food, I don’t make use of the consciousness of the mind which makes distinctions. But that sugar cane stank so badly it was not easy to eat. The people of that area could not get along without eating it, though. That’s an example of “to each his own.” They like to eat that stinking sugar cane, and if you didn’t give it to them to eat, they thought you were mistreating them. And so it is in this world; there are many kinds of things to eat, and people like to eat things with different tastes. People’s natures are different every single place you go.

You don’t have to pay any attention to whether things stink as long as you don’t have a “great self.” Looking upon one’s self as very great is stinking. It is more stinking than stinking fish and stinking excrement. No one dares get near you. Why? It is not because you are great; it is because you have turned into something stinking.

Q2 Explains the false has no substance.

**Sutra: “Because a sense of smelling is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the nature of smelling. Apart from the two defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, this smelling is ultimately without substance.

Commentary:Because a sense of smelling is stimulated in the midst of the two false, defiling objects of penetration and obstruction -** the defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, those unclean things become manifest, and within them arises a smelling nature. The Chinese character (wen), can mean both to hear and to smell. Here it does not refer to hearing, but rather to the smelling nature. **Defiling appearances are taken in.** Because the smelling nature inhales the two defiling appearances of penetration and obstruction**, this is called the nature of smelling.** Once again, the smelling nature (wen xing, ) does not refer to the hearing nature (also wen xing) which returns the hearing to hear the self nature. It is not what Guan Yin Bodhisattva refers to when he says, “returning the hearing to hear the self nature, which I practiced to accomplishment of the Unsurpassed Way.” He listened to his own self-nature, and practiced to accomplishment the Unsurpassed Way. He obtained the perfect penetration of the ear organ. The text here, though, refers to the ability to smell. **Apart from the two defiling objects of penetration and obstruction, this smelling is ultimately without substance.** Apart from the two defiling states of penetration and obstruction, apart from these two defiling objects before one, smelling basically has no substantial nature.

Q3 It has no source.

**Sutra: “You should know that smelling does not come from penetration and obstruction, nor does it come forth from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness.

Commentary:** This is the same as the doctrine explained above. **You should know,** Ananda, **that smelling,** the smelling nature, **does not come from penetration and obstruction.** It is not from penetration and obstruction that the smelling nature comes into being. **Nor does it come forth from the sense organ.** Nor is it that the nose produces the smelling nature. **Nor is it produced from emptiness.** Where does it come from?

**Sutra:“Why? If it came from penetration, the smelling would be extinguished when there is obstruction, and then how could it experience obstruction? If it existed because of obstruction, then where there is penetration there would be no smelling; in that case, how would the awareness of fragrance, stench, and other such sensations come into being?

Commentary:Why?** What doctrine leads me to say that it does not come from penetration and obstruction, nor from the sense organ, nor from emptiness? I will explain it to you. Listen. **If it came from penetration, the smelling would be extinguished when there is obstruction.** Penetration and obstruction are direct opposites, and so if the nature of smelling came from penetration, obstruction would not have a smelling nature. The nature that smells obstructions would be extinguished. **And then how could it experience obstruction?** If the nature that smells obstructions were absent, how would you be able to know there are obstructions? **If it existed because of obstruction -** if the smelling nature existed because of obstructions, **then where there is penetration there would be no smelling.** You would not be able to smell with the smelling nature. How is it that you could perceive penetration and could perceive obstruction? Therefore, it does not come from penetration, and it does not come from obstruction. You should understand the nature of smelling. **In that case, how would the awareness of fragrance, stench, and other such sensations come into being?** Since it is neither penetrations nor obstructions, how do the sensations of fragrance and stench come into being?

**Sutra: “Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of penetration and obstruction. A nature of smelling such as this would have no self nature.

Commentary: Suppose it came from the sense organ -** if it were produced from the nose - **which is obviously devoid of penetration and obstruction.** It hasn’t any connection with penetration and obstruction. **A nature of smelling such as this would have no self nature.** However you explain it, it hasn’t any self nature either.

**Sutra: “Suppose it came from emptiness: smelling itself would turn around and smell your own nose. Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which smelled, what connection would it have with your entrance?

Commentary:Suppose it came from emptiness -** if the smelling nature came forth from emptiness - **smelling itself would turn around and smell your own nose.** It should first smell your nose. **Moreover, if it were emptiness itself which smelled, what connection would it have with your entrance?** Moreover, there’s another way to explain it. Let’s just suppose that the smelling nature did come from emptiness. Then what connection would it have with your nose entrance? Think it over. Is there any such principle?

Q4 Concludes by returning the false to the true.

**Sutra: “Therefore, you should know that the nose entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature.

Commentary: Therefore, you should know** - you ought to know the reason behind this doctrine is - **that the nose entrance is empty and false.** The nose organ, along with the smelling nature which is produced in it, is also empty, false, and unreal, **since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature.** As to its origin, it is not counted as a dharma produced from causes and conditions. Nor is its origin a spontaneous coming into being. Ultimately where does it come from? Have I not already explained it above? The five skandhas, the six entrances, the twelve places, and the eighteen realms - all these functions and awareness - do not go beyond the wonderful nature of true suchness of the Thus Come One’s treasury. They are all produced from the wonderful nature of true suchness of the Thus Come One’s treasury. Because of the first ignorant thought, all kinds of false views and false characteristics arise. The division into seeing and characteristics arises. “Seeing” is the ability to perceive; “characteristics” refers to things with form and appearance which are perceived. They are all created from the ignorant thought of the false thinking mind.

P4 The tongue entrance.
Q1 Brings up an example to reveal the false.

**Sutra: “Ananda, consider, for example, a person who licks his lips with his tongue. His excessive licking causes fatigue. If the person is sick, there will be a bitter flavor; a person who is not sick will have a subtle sweet sensation. Sweetness and bitterness demonstrate the tongue’s sense of taste. When the organ is inactive, a sense of tastelessness prevails. However, both the tongue and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Stress produces the characteristic of fatigue.

Commentary:** Before you heard the sutra, you were together with your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind every day, but in all that time you never knew where they came from. Who would have guessed that there were so many things in the treasury of the Thus Come One?

How big is the treasury of the Thus Come One, anyway, that it is able to contain so many things?

The treasury of the Thus Come One is bigger than anything else, and so it can contain everything. If it were not bigger than anything else then it would never be able to contain so many things.

Where does it put so many things?

Divide it up into categories. You have your own eye-entrance, and other people have their own eye entrances; you have your ear entrance, and other people have their ear-entrances; you have your nose entrance, others have their nose entrances; you have your tongue entrance, and they have their tongue entrances. If they were all just jumbled up together, when it came time to use them, how would you be able to? If they were not simply lumped together but were divided so that each person’s entrances were in an individual place, there would have to be a lot of places. It would have to be a big space. That’s why I say that the treasury of the Thus Come One is bigger than anything else and can contain everything. There is nothing it does not contain. Where are we now? We are all in the treasury of the Thus Come One.

”We haven’t seen what the treasury of the Thus Come One looks like,” you say.

You see it every day, but you don’t recognize it. In all your daily activities you are within the treasury of the Thus Come One. What your eyes see, what your ears hear - absolutely everything is within the treasury of the Thus Come One. Yet you don’t know what the treasury of the Thus Come One looks like. In China there is the saying,

I can’t tell what Lu mountain
really looks like,
Because I myself am standing
on Lu mountain.

Why can’t you tell what Lu mountain looks like? Because you are on the mountain itself, and so you cannot see it in its entirety. Those of you who understand know that everything is a manifestation of the treasury of the Thus Come One. Those who don’t understand the Buddhadharma don’t even know what is meant by the treasury of the Thus Come One. Such people slander the Buddha. How? They say, “All Buddhism talks about is the treasury of the Thus Come One, the treasury of the Thus Come One, and how it contains everything. The Buddha’s greed is greater than anyone else’s. He stores away absolutely everything.” But this is a mistake. The treasury of the Thus Come One is not the Buddha’s. Everyone has a share in it. So that kind of view is a mistake.

**Ananda, consider, for example, a person who licks his lips with his tongue.** He uses his tongue to lick his own lips. I’ll tell you something funny. More than likely that man didn’t have a girlfriend, so he took to kissing himself. Do you believe that? It’s true! **His excessive licking causes fatigue.** He doesn’t just lick them once and let it go at that. He continually licks his lips. He licks himself for a long time and then gets tired. **If the person is sick -** if the person who is licking his lips is sick, **there will be a bitter flavor.** After licking for a long time he will be aware of a very bitter flavor. What kind of sickness does this sick person have? Perhaps he’s love sick; that is, he’s thinking about women. So he licks his own lips for a long time and is aware of bitterness. He feels, “Ah, this isn’t flavorful – it’s not very interesting.” Do you notice how when I speak Buddhadharma nobody seems to understand very well, but as soon as I begin to explain such matters as this, everyone understands?

**A person who is not sick will have a subtle sweet sensation.** Someone who is not sick will have ever so slight a sensation of sweetness. **Sweetness and bitterness demonstrate the tongue’s sense of taste.** Because of these two flavors, the organ of the tongue manifests. Then the function of the tongue can appear. **When the organ is inactive, a sense of tastelessness prevails.** When the tongue is not in motion, tastelessness constantly prevails in the tongue. “Tastelessness” means no flavor whatsoever. **However, both the tongue and the fatigue** come together. They **originate in Bodhi.** Why does the tongue get fatigued in that way? **Stress produces the characteristic of fatigue.** It occurs when, in the true nature of Bodhi, a falseness arises, and prolongation produces the characteristic of fatigue.

Q2 Explains that the false has no substance.

**Sutra: “Because the two defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness, as well as tastelessness, stimulate a recognition of taste which in turn draws in these defiling sensations, it becomes what is known as a sense of taste. Apart from the two defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness and apart from tastelessness, the sense of taste is originally without a substance.

Commentary: Because the two defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness, as well as tastelessness, stimulate a recognition of taste which in turn draws in these defiling sensations, it becomes what is known as a sense of taste.** The word “tastelessness” appears here, but you can say that it doesn’t count as a flavor, so the text merely says, “two false, defiling objects.” “Plain cabbage boiled in plain water is tasteless and hasn’t any flavor.” If one doesn’t add any salt or any oil but just cooks the cabbage in plain water, it will be tasteless. Within bitterness and sweetness a kind of awareness arises and takes in the two appearances. **Apart from the two defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness and apart from tastelessness, the sense of taste is originally without a substance.** Although tastelessness basically lacks flavor, it gives rise to sweetness and bitterness, and so you could say that tastelessness *is* the sweet and *is* the bitter, and that is why the text refers to “two kinds of defiling objects.” Apart from them, taste has no substantial nature of its own.

Q3 It has no source.

**Sutra: “Thus, Ananda, you should know that the perception of sweetness, bitterness, and tastelessness does not come from sweetness or bitterness, nor does it exist because of tastelessness, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness.

Commentary:**This is the same principle as was stated above. **Thus, Ananda, you should know that the perception -** the tasting that was explained above - **of sweetness, bitterness, and tastelessness** - when your own tongue recognizes the flavor of bitterness and of tastelessness - **does not come from sweetness or bitterness.** It is not from the flavors of bitterness and sweetness that the recognition arises. **Nor does it exist because of tastelessness.** Nor is it because of tastelessness that there is that kind of recognition. **Nor does it arise from the sense organ.** It is also not produced from the tongue. **Nor is it produced from emptiness.

Sutra:“For what reason? If it came from sweetness and bitterness, it would cease to exist when tastelessness was experienced, so how could it recognize tastelessness? If it arose from tastelessness, it would vanish when the flavor of sweetness was tasted, so how could it perceive the two flavors, sweet and bitter?

Commentary:**Why? **If it came from sweetness and bitterness -** if the nature which recognizes tastes came from sweetness and bitterness - **it would cease to exist when tastelessness was experienced.** There would be no recognition of tastelessness. **So how could it recognize tastelessness?** Then how would one know the flavor of tastelessness? **If it arose from tastelessness -** if the taste recognizing nature arose from tastelessness - **it would vanish when the flavor of sweetness was tasted.** The nature that recognizes sweetness would disappear. **So how could it perceive the two flavors, sweet and bitter?** If, in fact, there were no recognition of sweetness, how could he still know of the two characteristics of sweetness and bitterness?

**Sutra:“Suppose it came from the tongue which is obviously devoid of the defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness and of tastelessness. An essence of tasting such as this would have no self nature.

Commentary:Suppose it came from the tongue which is obviously devoid of the defiling objects of sweetness and bitterness and of tastelessness.** If it came from the tongue, there would not be the flavors of sweetness and tastelessness, and bitterness. Why not? The tongue itself doesn’t have a flavor of sweetness or tastelessness or of bitterness. **An essence of tasting such as this would have no self nature.** The taste recognizing nature would not have a self nature.

**Sutra: “Suppose it came from emptiness: the sense of taste would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mouth. Suppose, moreover, that it was emptiness itself which tasted; what connection would that have with your entrance?

Commentary:Suppose it came from emptiness.** If the taste recognizing nature came from within emptiness, **the sense of taste would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mouth.** Emptiness would naturally know what it tastes; how would you know? If the taste recognizing nature tastes were to come from emptiness, emptiness itself would recognize them, and your mouth would not be able to recognize them. **Suppose, moreover, that it was emptiness itself which taste** - if emptiness itself knew of this taste recognizing nature, **what connection would that have with your entrance?** It wouldn’t have any connection with your tongue entrance.

Q4 Concludes by returning the false to the true.

**Sutra: “Therefore, you should know that the tongue entrance is empty and false since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is it spontaneous in nature.

Commentary: Therefore**, because of that, **you should know,** Ananda. Don’t continue to be so confused; don’t continue to be so stupid; don’t continue to be so unclear. You ought to know that the **tongue entrance is empty and false.** It is an empty falseness. It is not counted as causes and conditions. **It neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is it spontaneous in nature.** It, too, is produced from within the true nature of Bodhi, the wonderful nature of true suchness of the Thus Come One’s treasury.

P5 The body entrance.
Q1 Brings up an example to reveal the false.

**Sutra:“Ananda, consider, for example, a person who touches his warm hand with his cold hand. If the cold is in excess of the warmth, the warm hand will become cold; if the warmth is in excess of the cold, his cold hand will become warm. So the sensation of warmth and cold is felt through the contact and separation of the two hands. Fatiguing contact results in the interpenetration of warmth and cold. However, both the body and the fatigue originate in Bodhi. Protraction produces the characteristic of fatigue.

Commentary:Ananda, consider, for example, a person who touches his warm hand with his cold hand. If the cold is in excess of the warmth** - the cold is more powerful - **his the warm hand will become cold.** The warm hand will be cold, too. **If the warmth is in excess of the cold, his cold hand will become warm.** The cold hand will turn warm. **So the sensation of warmth and cold is felt through the contact and separation of the two hands.** The contact of the cold and warm hands involves an awareness of union. The knowledge of contact and the separation which is called lack of contact are manifested. **Fatiguing contact results in the interpenetration of warmth and cold.** If the characteristics of cold and warmth are brought about, it is because of fatigue which results from the contact of the two hands. **The body and the fatigue originate in Bodhi.** The body and the awareness of touch are both Bodhi. **Protraction produces the characteristic of fatigue.** This is a case of protraction within the true nature of Bodhi giving rise to the characteristic of fatigue.

Q2 Explains that the false has no substance.

**Sutra:
“Because a physical sensation is stimulated in the midst of the two defiling objects of separation and union, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the awareness of sensation. Apart from the two sets of defiling objects of separation and union, and pleasantness and unpleasantness, the awareness of sensation is originally without a substance.

Commentary: Because a physical sensation is stimulated in the midst of the two defiling objects of separation and union, defiling appearances are taken in; this is called the awareness of sensation.** Because there is separation and union - these two kinds of sensations of contact, these two kinds of false, defiling objects - a feeling arises within them, and the body’s two hands draw in the feeling of these defiling appearances, the separation and the union. **Apart from the two sets of defiling objects of separation and union, and pleasantness and unpleasantness, the awareness of sensation is originally without a substance.** “Unpleasant” refers to a state of suffering; “pleasant” refers to a state of bliss. That which one likes is a state of bliss. That which one dislikes is a state of suffering. So apart from the two defiling objects of separation and union, the sensation of contact hasn’t any fundamental substance, either. It hasn’t a substance of its own.

Q3 It has no source.

**Sutra:“Thus, Ananda, you should know that this sensation does not come from separation and union, nor does it exist because of pleasantness and unpleasantness, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness.

Commentary: Thus, Ananda,** from this **you should know that this** kind of nature of **sensation does not come from separation and union.** Although it is said that it senses the existence of the defiling objects of separation and union, the nature that is aware of sensation itself does not come from separation and union. **Nor does it exist because of pleasantness and unpleasantness, nor does it arise from the sense organ -** nor is it produced from the body, **nor is it produced from emptiness -** nor is it brought forth from emptiness.

**Sutra:“For what reason? If it arose when there was union, it would disappear when there was separation, so how could it sense the separation? The two characteristics of pleasantness and unpleasantness are the same way.

Commentary:For what reason?** What is the principle? **If it arose when there was union -** if it were because of union that one had the nature that is aware of sensation - **it would disappear when there was separation.** When the palms separated, there would no longer be a nature that was aware of sensation; yet the nature is still there. **So how could it sense the separation?** If it were extinguished when there was separation, how could you still sense the separation? **The two characteristics of pleasantness and unpleasantness are the same way.** States of suffering and states of bliss follow the same principle.

**Sutra: “Suppose it came from the sense organ, which is obviously devoid of the four characteristics of union, separation, pleasantness, and unpleasantness; an awareness of physical sensation such as this would have no self nature.

Commentary:Suppose it came from the sense organ** - if you want to say that the awareness of contact comes from the body - **which is obviously devoid of the four characteristics of union, separation, pleasantness, and unpleasantness.** How is it shown that sensation is not produced from the body? If it were, the body would have no way to be aware of union, of separation, of what is disagreeable, or of what is agreeable. **An awareness of physical sensation such as this -** your awareness of yourself - **would have no self nature.** The nature that is aware of sensation would not have a self-nature, either.

**Sutra:“Suppose it came from emptiness; the awareness of sensations would be experienced by emptiness itself, what connection would that have with your entrance?

Commentary:Suppose it came from emptiness** - if you then say that this nature that is aware of sensation is produced from within emptiness; **the awareness of sensations would be experienced by emptiness itself, what connection would that have with your entrance?** It would have no connection with your body entrance. Since all these various propositions are not possible, what conclusion is to be drawn?

Q4 Concludes by returning the false to the true.

**Sutra:“Therefore you should know that the body entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature.

Commentary: Therefore you should know that the body entrance is empty and false -** because of that, you, Ananda, should know that the realm of the body entrance is also an empty falseness. **Since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence, nor is spontaneous in nature.** It is also produced from within the wonderful true nature of Bodhi.

P6 The mind entrance.
Q1 Brings up example to reveal the false.

**Sutra:“Ananda, consider, for example, a person who becomes so fatigued that he goes to sleep. Having slept soundly, he awakens and tries to recollect what he experienced while asleep. He recalls some things and forgets others. Thus, his upside-downness goes through production, dwelling, change, and extinction, which are taken in and returned to a center habitually, each following the next without ever being overtaken. This is known as the mind organ or intellect. The mind and the fatigue are both Bodhi. Persistence produces the characteristic of fatigue.

Commentary:Ananda, consider, for example, a person who becomes so fatigued that he goes to sleep.** He’s too tired and wants to sleep. **Having slept soundly, he awakens and tries to recollect what he experienced while asleep. He recalls some things and forgets others.** When he wakes up, he sees the defiling objects before him, and he will be able to think about some of the experiences he encountered and unable to think about others because he has forgotten them. **Thus, his upside-downness -** this is upside-downness in the mental process, and in it are the four aspects of **production, dwelling, change, and extinction.** Take sleeping, for example: thinking about going to sleep is production. Actual sleeping is dwelling. On the verge of waking from sleep is the state of change. Having awakened and not wishing to sleep any more is the extinction of sleep. So, within sleeping itself there is production, dwelling, change, and extinction. There is also production, dwelling, change, and extinction in people’s thoughts. First thinking of something is production. Dwelling is your actually thinking about your pursuing the false thought you struck up. Change is when you finish thinking about it. Extinction is when you are no longer thinking of it. Just within one thought there are the four divisions. The Buddhadharma is inexhaustible and unending, once you look into it deeply. Take a telephone call, for example. Production is the phone ringing; dwelling is when you are talking on the phone; change is when you are about to complete the call; and extinction is when you have finished speaking. There is production, dwelling, change, and extinction to everything, no matter what it is.

There is production, dwelling, change, and extinction in the human lifespan, as well. One’s birth is production. One has a period of dwelling in the world. Sickness is change, and death is extinction. But, does a person return to emptiness after one process of production, dwelling, change, and extinction? No. There is still the production, dwelling, change, and extinction of future lives. In a future life the environment changes, but there is still production, dwelling, change, and extinction. So production, dwelling, change, and extinction is a very important concept within Buddhism. Absolutely anything can be used to illustrate the principle. This table is another example. When this piece of wood was growing it was sealed with the destiny to become this table; that is production. Dwelling is when it was made into the table. It will not always remain as it is now, and after a long period of use it will fall apart, and that is change. Once it falls apart it cannot be used any longer, so it is burned, and that is extinction.

Worlds also undergo production, dwelling, change, and extinction. A world takes a long time to undergo production. It takes twenty small kalpas to produce a world. It dwells for twenty small kalpas. It undergoes destruction for twenty small kalpas, and it is empty for twenty small kalpas. That is production, dwelling, destruction, and emptiness, which is the same as production, dwelling, change, and extinction.

How many years is a kalpa?

It is 139,600 years. A thousand kalpas is counted as one small kalpa. Twenty small kalpas count as one medium kalpa. Four medium kalpas make one great kalpa. Production, dwelling, destruction, and emptiness take a great kalpa. Our knowledge of history reaches back for only a few thousand years - not even the extent of a single kalpa. The reach of our knowledge is very small. Kalpas, too, have production, dwelling, destruction, and emptiness - production, dwelling, change, and extinction.

**Taken in and returned to a center habitually.** The mind takes in the defiling appearances of production, dwelling, change, and extinction, in this case during sleep. These appearances return to the organ of the human mind, **each following the next without ever being overtaken.** The production, dwelling, change, and extinction of thoughts in the mind are like waves on water.

**This is known as the mind organ or intellect.** Of the six organs of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, the mind is now being discussed. **The mind and the fatigue** originate in **Bodhi. Persistence produces the characteristic of fatigue.** This is also a perseverance within the true nature of Bodhi which produces the characteristic of fatigue.

Q2 Explains that the false has no substance.

**Sutra: “The two defiling objects of production and extinction stimulate a sense of knowing which in turn grasps these inner sense data, reversing the flow of seeing and hearing. Before the flow reaches the ground it is known as the faculty of intellect.

Commentary:The two defiling objects of production and extinction stimulate a sense of knowing.** The defiling objects of the mind lie within the mind. The mind conditions dharmas which are subject to production and extinction. There are also dharmas which are not subject to production and extinction, but the dharmas conditioned by the mind are dharmas of production and extinction, which are defiling objects. A nature of aware knowing accumulates and dwells in their midst, and **in turn grasps these inner sense data.** “Grasps” here means the same as “taking in,” mentioned above. **Reversing the flow of seeing and hearing.** The defiling objects of seeing and hearing revert to the sixth mind consciousness. **Before the flow reaches the ground** - before this reverting current has reached the eighth mind consciousness - **it is known as the faculty of intellect.** Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, bodily sensation, and knowing: the sixth of these consciousnesses is the knowing awareness nature in the organ of the mind.

”Before the flow reaches the ground” can also refer to the reverting current flowing back into the mind. What is the reverting current? When the mind’s thought conditions dharmas, it is as if there is a current which flows back into the mind. Before the flow reaches the eighth consciousness, there is a nature of aware knowing in the sixth mind consciousness.

**Sutra:“Apart from the two sets of defiling objects of waking and sleeping and of production and extinction, the faculty of intellect is originally without substance.

Commentary:Apart from the two sets of defiling objects of waking and sleeping -** of being asleep and of being awake - **and of production and extinction -** and of the two defiling objects of production and extinction - **the faculty of intellect is originally without substance.** It, too, does not have a substantial nature.

Q3 It has no source.

**Sutra:“Thus, Ananda, you should know that the faculty of intellect does not come from waking, sleeping, production, or extinction, nor does it arise from the sense organ, nor is it produced from emptiness.

Commentary: Thus, Ananda** - from the doctrine which has been explained, Ananda, **you should know that the faculty of intellect** - the nature of aware knowing - **does not come from waking, sleeping, production, or extinction, nor does it arise from the sense organ -** nor does it come out of the organ of the mind. **Nor is it produced from emptiness.** Nor is it produced from within emptiness.

**Sutra:“For what reason? If it came from waking, it would disappear at the time of sleeping, so how could it experience sleep? If it came from production, it would cease to exist at the time of extinction, so how could it undergo extinction? If it came from extinction it would disappear at the time of production, so how could it know about production?

Commentary: For what reason? If it came from waking** - if the nature of aware knowing arose when one was awake - **it would disappear at the time of sleeping.** It would disappear when one is asleep, and **how could it experience sleep?** If it weren’t there when one was asleep, what would be meant by sleep? **If it came from production, it would cease to exist at the time of extinction.** When there was extinction, it would be gone, **so how could it undergo extinction?** Who is it who would undergo extinction? **If it came from extinction it would disappear at the time of production, so how could it know about production?** In that case, it would cease to be when there was production. Without the nature of aware knowing, who would know there was production?

**Sutra:“Suppose it came from the sense organ; waking and sleeping cause only a physical opening and closing respectively. Apart from these two movements, the faculty of intellect is as unsubstantial as flowers in space, because it is fundamentally without a self nature.

Commentary:Suppose it came from the sense organ -** if you say it comes from the organ of the mind, then **waking and sleeping -** these two characteristics - **cause only a physical opening and closing respectively.** There is an opening and closing in accord with your own body. **Apart from these two movements** of wakefulness and sleep **the faculty of intellect is as unsubstantial as flowers in space, because it is fundamentally without a self nature.** Apart from the opening and closing, it is the same as nonexistent. It has no self-nature.

**Sutra: “Suppose it came from emptiness; the sense of intellect would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mind. Then what connection would that have with your entrance?

Commentary:Suppose it came from emptiness -** if it were emptiness that produced the nature of aware knowing - **the sense of intellect would be experienced by emptiness instead of by the mind.** If it were emptiness itself that knew, **then what connection would that have with your entrance?** What connection would that have with you?

Q4 Concludes by returning the false to the true.

**Sutra: “Therefore, you should know that the mind entrance is empty and false, since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence nor is spontaneous in nature.

Commentary:Therefore, you should know that the mind entrance is empty and false.** The mind entrance is also an empty falseness. **Since it neither depends upon causes and conditions for existence -** it is not produced from causes and conditions - **nor is spontaneous in nature.** Ultimately, then, why do you have a nature of aware knowing? It is produced from a persistence within the nature of the wonderful true suchness of the treasury of the Thus Come One, which gives rise to the characteristic of fatigue.